

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJ: JOVITO VILLALBA WARNS AGAINST INCREASING CORRUPTION IN  
GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: JOVITO VILLALBA, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION URD PARTY,  
HAS WARNED AGAINST INCREASING GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION IN VENEZUELA,  
THUS PUBLICLY EXPRESSING CONCERNS WHICH ARE BEING INCREASINGLY  
VOICED IN PRIVATE BY MANY VENEZUELAN. END SUMMARY

1. URD PARTY LEADER AND LONG TIME PROMINENT POLITICIAN JOVITO  
VILLALBA, IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN EL UNIVERSAL MAY 16, WARNED  
AGAINST CORRUPTION AND VOICED HARSH CRITICISM OF THE VENEZUELAN  
POLITICAL SYSTEM. VILLALBA DECLARED THAT VENEZUELA SUFFERS FROM  
"LACK OF ADMINISTRATIVE HONESTY," WHICH IS CAUSING IT TO "SLIP  
DANGEROUSLY TOWARDS THE ABYSS." VENEZUELA, HE COMPLAINED, IS  
"OSTENTATIOUS AND CRUELY MATERIALISTIC" AND DOES NOT WORK FOR  
ITS WEALTH LIKE THE JAPANESE OR THE AMERICANS, BUT SIMPLY "REAPS  
THE FRUIT OF OUR LUCKY STAR."

2. VENEZUELA, HE SAID, IS POLITICALLY BACKWARD, A "HALF-WAY  
DEMOCRACY," AND THE COUNTRY HAS NO INSTITUTIONAL CHECKS ON  
CORRUPTION. SINCE ONLY EXECUTIVE POWER EXISTS, AND IT RESTS IN  
THE HANDS OF THE PRESIDENT, DEMOCRACY IS NO MORE THAN "BLAH, BLAH,  
BLAH." NOTHING WORKS OR EVERYTHING WORKS BADLY, AND RESPONSIBILITY  
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FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY AND FOR THE DEFECTS AND CRIMES WHICH

ARE INCREASING IS NEVER DETERMINED MUCH LESS SANCTIONED." HE ASSERTED. NO ONE CAN TRUTHFULLY CLAIM THAT IN VENEZUELA THERE EXISTS THE SAME KIND OF PROCEDURE AS IN THE UNITED STATES, HE SAID, WHERE GOVERNMENT WRONG DOERS ARE PUBLICLY PUNISHED AS THE RESULT OF THE EXISTENCE OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, A FREE PRESS AND AN EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. VILLALBA SAID THAT IN VENEZUELA WEIGHT IS NOT ATTACHED TO THE EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES AND THAT ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM "INVOLVES IN PRACTICE THE OBLIGATION FOR A POLITICAL ACTIVIST TO HIDE THE MISDEED OR CRIME OF A POLITICAL COMPANION AND PREVENT HIS INVESTIGATION AND PUNISHMENT. POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITH ANOTHER PERSON IS ALWAYS SYNONYMOUS WITH CONNIVANCE AND COMPLICITY." HE DEFENDED HIS VIEWS AS BEING "NOT PESSIMISTIC OR DEFEATIST OR ADVENTURIST," BUT "REALISTIC." "THE SITUATION IS BAD AND GETTING WORSE EACH DAY," HE WARNED.

3. COMMENT: VILLALBA, WHO HAS BEEN LARGELY OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE SINCE HIS PARTY'S DISASTROUS DEFEAT IN THE 1973 ELECTIONS, AND WHO NOW HOLDS NO PUBLIC OFFICE, IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO RENEW PUBLIC ATTENTION TO HIMSELF. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOW PUBLICLY VOICED WHAT MANY SUPPORTERS AS WELL AS OPPONENTS OF PRESIDENT PEREZ ARE SAYING IN PRIVATE, NAMELY THAT WITH OIL WEALTH ACCUMULATING AT AN UNPRECEDENTED RATE ADMINISTRATIVE CORRUPTION IS BECOMING A WIDESPREAD AND THREATENING PROBLEM.  
SHLAUDEMAM

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## Message Attributes

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